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AN ESSAY ON MAN.

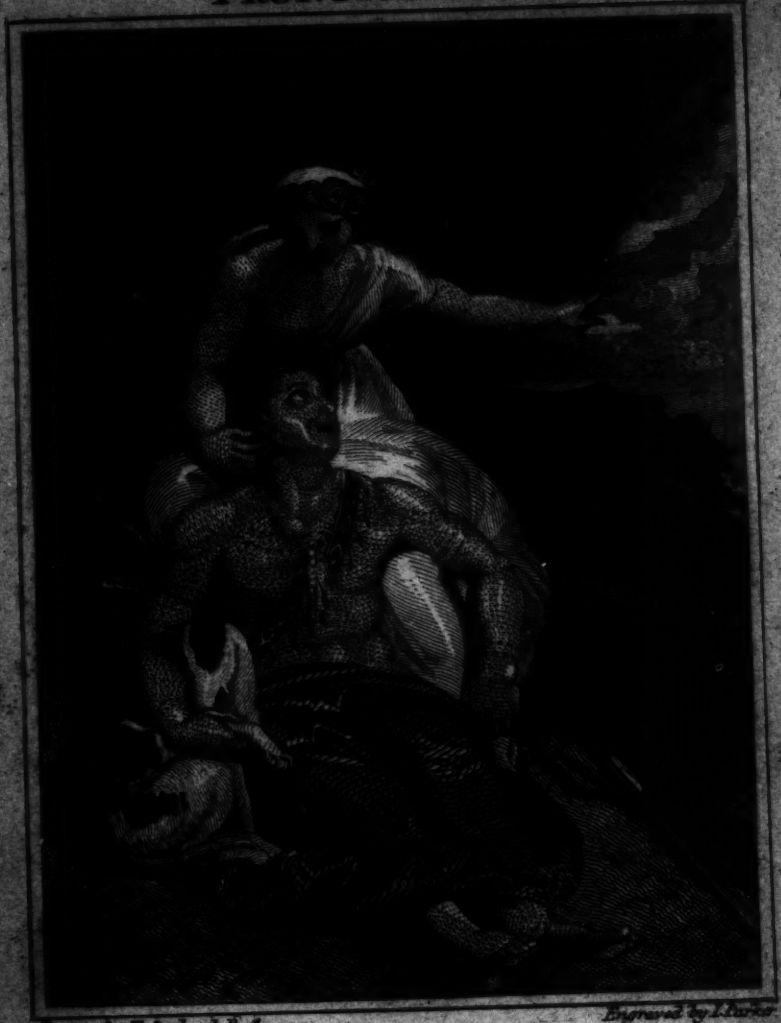
AN

ESSAY

ON

MAN.

FRONTISPIECE.



Drawn by T. Stothard R.A. Engraved by I. Barrow

But thinks, admitted to that equal Sky,
His faithful Dog shall bear him Company

Ep. I. Lines 111. 112.

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AN

ESSAY

ON

MAN.

BY

ALEXANDER POPE, Esq.

A NEW EDITION.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A CRITICAL ESSAY,

By J. AIKIN, M.D.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES,
(SUCCESSORS TO MR. CADELL), STRAND.

1796.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

OBSERVATIONS
ON
POPE's
ESSAY ON MAN.

OF the poems of POPE, none perhaps is more celebrated in popular fame, none has afforded more paſſages for ſtoring in the memory, and applying on common occaſions, than the ESSAY ON MAN. It cannot, therefore, be an unintereſting topic, to enquire what has given it ſuch a ſhare of the public approbation; and how its author has contrived to render it at the ſame time the favourite of the graver part, and the admiration of the more poliſhed, of his readers.

This work is by the writer himſelf repreſented as a *ſhort ſyſtem of ethics*, which he might as well have compoſed in proſe as in verſe, had he not preferred the latter for two reaſons;—one, that principles and maxims when verſified are more impreſſive, and adhere more firmly in the memory; the other, that he was able to expreſs himſelf with more brevity in verſe than in proſe. With reſpect, then, to the ſubject itſelf, it appears that he did not ſelect it on account of any peculiar fitneſs he diſcerned in it to become the ground-work of a poem; but that, having choſen it for another reaſon, he gave it the cloathing of verſe, as in his opinion the moſt advantageous. And this repreſentation nearly coincides with the received fact, that the work was ſuggeſted to him by his friend, Lord BOLINGBROKE,

who ſketched out the plan, and furniſhed moſt of the materials, with the intention of uſhering into the world a ſyſtem of his own, decorated with the poetry of POPE. BOLINGBROKE had himſelf ſufficient vigour of imagination and brilliancy of ſtyle to have written a proſe eſſay which might engage the attention of perſons fond of moral and philoſophical ſpeculation; but by judiciouſly borrowing the Muſe of POPE, he has diffuſed his ſentiments on theſe topics through all claſſes and ages of Engliſh literature; has made them familiar to our early and our mature conceptions; and ſtamped them in indelible characters on the language of the country. This converſion of a dry and argumentative ſubject into a ſplendid and popular one, is a miracle of the poetic art; and an enquiry

into the means by which it has been effected will probably go far into the elucidation of that *eſſential character* of poetical compoſition which diſtinguiſhes it from proſe.

On taking a ſurvey of the ESSAY ON MAN for the purpoſe of marking and arranging its moſt ſtriking paſſages, it will probably be found that they are reducible to three principal heads. 1ſt. A maxim, propoſition, or ſentence often occurs, preſented in the naked ſimplicity of philoſophical language, but ſo concentered by nervous brevity, and rounded by the harmonious ſtructure of the verſe, that it ſinks into the mind with the ſame kind of force that a weighty and poliſhed ball penetrates ſolid matter. It would be eaſy from every epiſtle to adduce examples of this excellence. Thus, ſpeaking of the Deity, he ſays,

To him no high, no low, no great, no ſmall;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all:
Of Man;
The glory, jeſt, and riddle of the world:
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err:
Of Providence;
All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction, which thou canſt not ſee;
All Diſcord, Harmony not underſtood;
All partial Evil, univerſal Good.

In this ſtyle moſt of the purely argumentative parts are written; and ſo ſuperior was POPE to all other authors, whether in verſe or proſe, in this reſpect, that his ſincere friend and admirer, SWIFT, ſelects this faculty as his diſtinguiſhing excellence:

When POPE can in one couplet fix
More ſenſe than I can do in ſix;

yet SWIFT himſelf was by no means a feeble or prolix writer. Now, as nothing comes more home to the minds of men in general, or is more univerſally congenial to the taſte of readers, than a moral ſentiment or religious truth forcibly and clearly expreſſed, it is probably to the copious admixture of paſſages of this kind that the ESSAY ON MAN is indebted for the greateſt part of its popularity. Theſe are the clauſes of ſterling weight and effect, which impreſs thoſe who are little diſpoſed to enter into a train of argumentation, or who have little ſenſibility to poetic beauties.

But the mere faculty of compreſſing ſenſe into a ſmall compaſs and putting it into harmonious meaſure, admirable as it is for the moral writer, goes but a ſhort way in forming the poet. For this laſt character POPE is greatly indebted, 2dly, to

that ſplendor of diction, which illuminates an intellectual truth by aſſociating it with ſome kindred ſenſible object of the ſublime or beautiful claſs. It is this which gives life and motion to language; and ſuperadds to its ſimple purpoſe of conveying the requiſite ideas, that of gratifying the imagination with a rapid ſucceſſion of ſtriking figures. Scarcely any writer has ſurpaſſed POPE in this quality, which is indeed of the very eſſence of poetry. He ſtudied it with all the aſſiduity of a profeſſor of his art; and his critics and annotators have brought to light wonderful proofs of his attention to enrich his language with the ſpoils of all ages and countries. It is not eaſy to open this work at a ſingle page which will not furniſh examples of juſt and noble expreſſions of the figurative kind, ſerving to impart that vivid colouring to his diction which renders it ſo

enchanting to the lover of poetry. Two or three examples will ſerve to illuſtrate my meaning.

Who knows but he, whoſe *hand* the lightning forms,
Who *heaves* old Ocean, and who *wings* the ſtorms,
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæſar's mind,
Or *turns* young Ammon *looſe* to *ſcourge* mankind.

Let Earth *unbalanc'd* from her orbit *fly*,
Planets and ſuns *run lawleſs* thro' the ſky,
Let ruling angels from their ſpheres be *hurl'd*,
Being on being *wreck'd*, and world on world.

For him alone Hope leads from goal to goal,
And *opens* ſtill, and *opens* on his ſoul;
Till *lengthen'd on* to Faith, and unconfin'd,
It *pours* the bliſs that fills up all the mind.

Oh while along the *ſtream* of Time thy name
Expanded flies, and *gathers* all its fame,
Say, ſhall my *little bark* attendant ſail,
Purſue the *triumph*, and *partake* the *gale*?

It may be preſumed unneceſſary to point out more particularly the force of theſe *verba ardentia*, theſe "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," to any one capable of reliſhing true poetry.

A third expedient employed by POPE to diverſify and enliven his ſubject, is the introduction of little pictures and incidents by way of illuſtration, which are generally conceived with great happineſs, and wrought with peculiar care. Of this kind is, the ſportive lamb unconſcious of his approaching fate; the Indian ſavage indulging his humble expectations

of future exiſtence; the enumeration by pride of the benefits of nature deſigned for Man; the progreſs of ſuperſtition; and the hiſtorical alluſions to the vanity of human grandeur. Theſe form an agreeable relief to the train of precept or argument, and eſſentially add to the *poetical* character of the work.

" It is in this manner that an ethical treatiſe, in its tranſmiſſion from the mind of a philoſopher to that of a poet, has aſſumed a new dreſs, and has accommodated itſelf to a new ſet of readers; nor, perhaps, does the hiſtory of the art of poetry afford a clearer example of its powers and limits. Its *powers* have been, to render a ſubject, involved in ſyſtem and argument, not only popular and familiar, but prolific of ſublime and beautiful paſſages which are

become interwoven into the very body of national literature, and have given a tinge to national opinion; and after ſuch a proof of ability, if POPE's title to the honours of a poet of the very firſt order be diſputed, it can only be by thoſe who have framed an artificial claſſification of poetic merits, in which they have placed at the head of the ſcale thoſe efforts of pure imagination which are ſcarcely compatible with the nobleſt exertions of the underſtanding. The *limits* of the art, however, are almoſt as ſtrongly marked in this performance, as its powers; for it is to a too pertinacious attempt of arguing in verſe, and diſplaying all the acuteneſs of a philoſophical diſputant, that may be attributed the many proſaic lines, mean expreſſions, inaccuracies of conſtruction, and defects in the mechaniſm of verſifica-

tion, which render this piece but an unfavourable ſpecimen of that high poliſh and correctneſs which are ſuppoſed peculiarly to characteriſe the author, and which in ſome of his poems he has almoſt uniformly exhibited. Indeed, there are ſufficient tokens that the work was undertaken as a taſk—that the writer was occaſionally tired or bewildered in following his argument—and that the poet and ſyſtem-builder did not always happily draw together; but theſe remarks lead to the conſideration of another topic, the proper ſubject or matter of this Eſſay.

Concerning the *ſyſtem of ethics* contained in the ESSAY ON MAN, much has been written; and in particular, the learned Prelate who undertook the office of Editor to POPE's miſcellaneous works has

beſtowed much pains upon it in the elaborate notes and commentary accompanying the text. But erudition and acuteneſs are not the only requiſites of a good commentator. That conformity of ſentiment which enables him fully to enter into the intention of his author, and that fairneſs of diſpoſition which places him above every wiſh of diſguiſing or miſrepreſenting it, are qualifications not leſs eſſential. In theſe points it is no breach of candour to affirm (ſince the public voice has awarded the ſentence) that Dr. WARBURTON has in various of his critical labours ſhewn himſelf extremely defective; and perhaps in none more than in thoſe he has expended upon this performance; his manifeſt purpoſes in which have been, to give it a ſyſtematic perfection that it does not poſſeſs, to conceal as much as poſſi-

ble the ſuſpicious ſource whence the author derived his leading ideas, and to reduce the whole to the ſtandard of moral orthodoxy. So much is the ſenſe of the poet ſtrained and warped by theſe proceſſes of his commentator, that it is ſcarcely poſſible in many places to enter into his real meaning, without laying aſide the commentary, and letting the text ſpeak for itſelf.

Somewhat, however, of an analytical view of the ſubject and reaſoning, connected by ſuch a chain of method as is clearly deducible from the work itſelf, cannot but be uſeful by way of preparing the reader, who perhaps may be little converſant with argumentative topics, for comprehending it as a whole. And as it is not intended that this edition ſhould be accompanied with the uſual illuſ-

trative appendages, I ſhall endeavour to ſupply their place by a prefatory ſketch of the contents, drawn up with as much brevity as is conſiſtent with the purpoſe in view.

The ESSAY ON MAN is divided into four epiſtles. Of theſe, the firſt peculiarly treats of Man with reſpect to the place he holds in the univerſe; and the principal topic is the refutation of all objections againſt the wiſdom and benevolence of that providence which placed him here, derived from the weakneſs and imperfection of his nature. After a dignified exordium, in which the poet invites his friend to accompany him in a ſurvey of the whole "ſcene of Man," with the final intention of juſtifying the ways of God towards him, (which is to be regarded as the general ſubject of the entire

Eſſay)—he proceeds to ſome remarks on the impoſſibility of comprehending, with the limited faculties of the human mind, the plan of Deity in framing the ſyſtem of the univerſe; and he ſets in ſtrong contraſt the omniſcience of the Creator againſt the ignorance of the creature. Yet, in laying it down as a principle, that "we can reaſon only "from what we know," he ſeems to invalidate ſome of his own conjectural arguments concerning that *order* of the univerſe which is to account for apparent partial defects. The leading idea running through this book, is that of a *ſcale of beings*, riſing in due gradation one above another, all bearing a relation to the great whole, and each endowed with the faculties proper for its ſtation. In ſuch a ſcale, there muſt be ſuch

a being as Man; and there is, therefore, no more reaſon to wonder that he is not elevated higher, than that he is raiſed ſo high. That he is beſt fitted for the place he occupies, is attempted to be ſhewn by various ſtriking obſervations; and much lively correction is beſtowed upon that pride which inclines us to believe the whole creation made for our uſe alone, and leads us rather to form vain wiſhes for unattainable perfections, than to accommodate ourſelves to our preſent lot. After a very noble deſcription of the divine attributes, and an exhortation to pious truſt in an over-ruling Providence, the book concludes with aſſerting as a clear deduction from the whole, the great axiom that *whatever is, is right.* That this concluſion is ſtrictly warranted by the premiſes, and that the mode of proof is the

beſt that could be deviſed in point of cogency and arrangement, will probably be called in queſtion by logical reaſoners; but the wonderful energy of ſome of the paſſages, and the poetical ſplendor of others, are ſo calculated for effect on the mind of the reader, that he muſt be cold indeed who does not riſe from the peruſal impreſſed and animated. Perhaps, if a perſon were called upon to exhibit an example of the utmoſt power of the Engliſh language in fulneſs, ſtrength, and dignity of expreſſion, he could not chooſe more happily than thoſe lines near the cloſe of this epiſtle in which the Deity is repreſented as the *ſoul of the univerſe*.

The ſecond epiſtle begins with pointing out "the "proper ſtudy of mankind," namely, themſelves; yet it cannot be ſaid that the bold contraſt drawn

between the powers of the human mind, on the one part, and its weakneſs, on the other, is highly encouraging. If NEWTON, with the wonderful reach of his intellectual faculties, were unable to "deſcribe or fix one movement of his mind," what other man may hope for ſucceſs in an inveſtigation of his own nature? Notwithſtanding, however, theſe ſarcaſms againſt human wiſdom, apparently drawn from the ſchool of CHARRON, the poet proceeds ſeriouſly to the ſubject of his epiſtle; and having ſtated the *two principles* which rule over Man, *ſelf-love* and *reaſon*, he goes on to ſhew the character and office of each, and their oppoſition or concurrence in influencing human conduct. Self-love he calls the *moving principle* which excites to action, on which account it is made the ſtrongeſt; reaſon is

the *comparing* and *reſtraining* principle: the objects of the former are ſome immediate good; of the latter, ſome remote or conſequential good. Both have the ſame general ends of attaining pleaſure and avoiding pain. But ſurely this repreſentation is inaccurate; for ſelf-love and reaſon ſtand in no ſort of oppoſition to each other; and the ſecond is rather an inſtrument employed by the firſt, the better to effectuate its ends, than a diſtinct principle of action. Reaſon is more properly oppoſed to the *paſſions*; which POPE juſtly terms *modes of ſelf-love*, all having for their object ſome real or ſuppoſed good. Theſe, he ſays, duly tempered and blended, give "all the ſtrength and colour of our life." Adopting, however, the theory which he has more particularly opened in one of his moral epiſtles, he

aſſerts the exiſtence of a *maſter paſſion*, which ſwallows up the reſt, and may be regarded as the innate diſeaſe of the mind, from every faculty of which it derives freſh nouriſhment. Yet inſtead of attempting to eradicate this leading propenſity, he adviſes to follow "nature's road," and content ourſelves with keeping it in proper bounds; for our paſſions, and even vices, by means of due culture, are convertible into our ſureſt virtues. The poet here admits that notion of the ancient moraliſts, which ſuppoſes the limits of virtue and vice to be blended in ſuch a manner, as to render it impoſſible to ſay where one ends and the other begins; or rather which makes every vice only the extreme of ſome virtue. Thus, that ruling paſſion which is in ſome inſtances our leading vice, is in others our leading

virtue; and every Man is both virtuous and vicious in degree. He concludes with ſhewing how, in the ſcheme of Providence, the different paſſions, propenſities, follies and defects of Men, are all made to conſpire to the general good—how the ties of mutual aid and intereſt are by their means drawn more cloſely—and how at length they reconcile Man to the loſs of a being ſo full of imperfection. Finally, he enumerates the various kinds of happineſs ariſing from the variety of Men's tempers and purſuits, and from the changes of object that accompany the different ſtages of life in each individual; and his inference from the whole matter is that "though Man is a fool, God is wiſe." This book is not remarkable for its poetical beauties. Its language is moſtly that of argument and ſimple il-

luſtration, and the ſubject is purſued with ſcarcely any digreſſion. Some of the concluding lines, however, are eminently beautiful; yet it is not eaſy to ſay what moral effect the author meant to produce by them. If Man's folly is equally conſpicuous in all he does; if his weakneſſes are made the inſtruments of his happineſs; if "in folly's cup ſtill laughs the bubble joy," and "not a vanity was given in vain," it would ſeem very fruitleſs to attempt by artificial wiſdom to correct the deſigned and inherent defects of our nature.

The third epiſtle begins by aſſuming, as the reſult of what has preceded, "that the Deity acts to one end, though by various laws;" in other words his aim is the production of general good, but by different, and ſometimes apparently oppoſite means;

of which, inſtances have been given in the various paſſions and propenſities of Mankind. The author next, in a ſuperior ſtrain of poetry, reſumes a former topic, and ſhews how all the parts of nature, by an univerſal chain of connection, contribute to the advantage of each other, and of the whole. He again, likewiſe, by various ſtriking examples, aims at mortifying that pride of Man which induces him to regard the whole creation as made for his ſake alone; and he exhibits the benefits which even the animals ſubjected to human dominion are made to derive from it. Theſe reflections lead him to mark the limits between reaſon and inſtinct; and in various beautiful inſtances he exemplifies the operation of the latter principle, always exactly adapted to its purpoſe, and to nothing further. In Man, as in other

animals, ſelf-love, modified by inſtinct, is the origin of the conjugal and the parental connexion; but in the human creature, reaſon takes up, improves, and prolongs the union thus formed, and carries it on to be the foundation of all the charities of life. Hence the poet takes occaſion to fall into a deſcription of the earlieſt ages of Man, when he was yet in the *ſtate of nature*, which he paints in all the pleaſing colours uſually appropriated to the golden age, and eſpecially characteriſes by that kind of fellowſhip with the beaſts which made them "joint tenants of the ſhade," and forbad the ſlaughtering of animals for food or ſacrifice. The next ſtage was that in which *art* gradually aroſe, the firſt efforts of which are attributed to imitation of the inſtinctive manners and actions of brutes. Theſe ideas of the

author will probably appear rather poetical than philoſophical, and confirmed neither by hiſtory nor analogy. He ſpeculates with more probability when he proceeds to the riſe of ſocieties and governments; when he deſcribes the progreſs from patriarchs to kings, and diſplays the origin of a pure and ſimple theiſm, deduced either from reaſon or tradition, and which repreſented the Deity as an object of love, not of fear. This happy ſtate of things was at length ſubverted by force, which introduced the law of tyrants, and ſupported itſelf by a league formed with that ſuperſtition which now began to take place of primitive religion. The origin and effects of this debaſing principle are deſcribed by POPE with all the poetic fire of LUCRETIUS, directed and concentrated by his own nervous ſenſe.

He then ſhews, how the ſame ſelf-love which nouriſhes the inordinate luſt of power in an individual, operates on the general body, to check and control it. Thus are formed thoſe generous ſpirits who employ themſelves in endeavours to inſtruct and enlighten Mankind; and in this manner the jarring intereſts of individuals unite to produce the harmony of the whole. The concluſion is, that in the comprehenſive ſcheme of Providence, ſelf-love and the ſocial principle are the ſame. This book is highly poetical. Dwelling more upon illuſtration than reaſoning, it has drawn from a variety of ſources pictures of beauty and ſublimity, coloured with all the ſplendor of language proper to the author. Its ſentiments, too, are elevated and generous; and though the accuracy of ſome may be diſputed,

the effect of the whole is in unison with the best feelings of the heart.

The fourth epistle opens with an eloquent address to happiness, the search after which is its interesting subject. The poet, after finding that happiness is fixed to no one spot or condition of life, soon comes to the conclusion that it belongs equally to all. He finds, too, that a Man cannot be made happy without the participation of others; and therefore, "happiness subsists not in the good of one, but of all." Order, "Heaven's first law," has made differences of rank and endowments among Mankind necessary; but it does not thence follow that there must be the same inequality in point of happiness. The essential goods of life are all included in "health, peace, and competence," of which the two former

conſiſt with virtue alone. The gifts of fortune belong equally to the good and bad, but the former are beſt qualified to enjoy them. Theſe poſitions lead the author to a very feeling eulogy on virtue, the influence of which in beſtowing bliſs is ſuch, that there was no neceſſity of exempting the good Man from the common ills of life, or of elevating him to a ſuperiority of condition. This ſtrain of reaſoning is ſucceeded by a ſplendid amplification of the philoſophical doctrine, that honour and ſhame ariſe from no particular ſtation, but that all true glory proceeds from well filling the allotted part, whatever it may be. The poet purſues difference of fortune through all the circumſtances of title, birth, rank, fame, and parts; and proves, by a variety of illuſtrious examples, how inſufficient with-

out virtue are advantages in all theſe reſpects to ſecure felicity. Concluding theſe illuſtrations with the fundamental truth, that "virtue alone is happineſs below," he recurs to his former doctrine of the converſion of ſelf-love to ſocial; and he deduces the principle of univerſal benevolence from the progreſs to be traced in the mind of the virtuous Man through the ſeveral ſtages and degrees of partial affection. With this, he unites the hope of renovated happineſs in a future ſtate; and thus completes the ſcale of Man's ſupreme felicity, as connected with the greateſt elevation of virtue. A moſt finiſhed and beautiful apoſtrophe to his "guide, philoſopher, and friend," with a brief ſummary of the topics of the ſeveral epiſtles, terminate the poem.

From the preceding analyſis of the ESSAY ON MAN, the reader will probably find himſelf at a loſs to deduce that exquiſite chain of argumentation, that lucid method, which are with ſo much evident labour attempted to be traced out by the Right Reverend Commentator. He will rather diſcern a writer, made a ſyſtem-builder by accident, but a poet by nature, taking up a grand and copious topic, well adapted in parts for the diſplay of his genius, but as a whole belonging to a very different claſs of compoſers. He will ſee him exhibiting a great variety of powers according to the exigencies of his ſubject; ſometimes cloſe, conciſe, nervous, and ſententious; ſometimes copious, expanſive and brilliant;—now enchanting by elegance and beauty, now commanding by dignity and ſublimity. The work itſelf he will probably eſteem as

one of the nobleſt productions, not only of its author, but of Engliſh poetry; and amidſt all its defects, he will rejoice that the writer was induced to exerciſe his talents in a walk ſo new, and in many reſpects ſo well ſuited to them. In fine, if he does not chooſe to derive his *ethical ſyſtem* from the ESSAY ON MAN, he will again and again have recourſe to it as a ſtorehouſe of great and generous ſentiments; and he will never riſe from its peruſal without feeling his mind animated with the love of virtue, and improved in benevolence towards his fellow creatures, and piety towards his Creator.

THE DESIGN.

HAVING propoſed to write ſome pieces on human life and manners, ſuch as (to uſe my Lord BACON's expreſſion) come home to men's buſineſs and boſoms, I thought it more ſatisfactory to begin with conſidering Man in the abſtract, his nature and his ſtate: ſince, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatſoever, it is neceſſary firſt to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpoſe of its being.

The ſcience of Human Nature is, like all other ſciences, reduced to a few clear points: there are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind as in that of the body: more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by ſtudying too much ſuch finer nerves and veſſels, the conformations and uſes of which will for ever eſcape our obſervation. The diſputes are all upon theſe laſt; and I will venture to ſay, they have leſs ſharpened the wits than the hearts of men againſt each other, and have diminiſhed the practice more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myſelf that this Eſſay has any merit, it is in ſteering betwixt the extremes of doctrines ſeemingly oppoſite; in paſſing over terms utterly unintelligible;

and in forming a temperate, yet not inconſiſtent; and a ſhort, yet not imperfect ſyſtem of Ethics.

This I might have done in proſe; but I choſe verſe, and even rhyme, for two reaſons: the one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts ſo written, both ſtrike the reader more ſtrongly at firſt, and are more eaſily retained by him afterwards. The other may ſeem odd, but it is true; I found I could expreſs them more ſhortly this way than in proſe itſelf, and nothing is truer than that much of the force, as well as grace, of arguments or inſtructions depends on their conciſeneſs. I was unable to treat this part of my ſubject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious; or more poetically, without ſacrificing perſpicuity to ornament, without wandering from the preciſion,

or breaking the chain of reaſoning. If any man can unite all theſe, without diminution of any of them, I freely confeſs he will compaſs a thing above my capacity.

What is now publiſhed, is only to be conſidered as a general map of MAN, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connection, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Conſequently theſe epiſtles in their progreſs (if I make any progreſs) will be leſs dry and more ſuſceptible of poetical ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the paſſage: to deduce the rivers, to follow them in their courſe, and to obſerve their effects, would be a taſk more agreeable.

EPISTLE I.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RESPECT TO THE UNIVERSE.

CONTENTS.

OF Man in the abſtract—That we can judge only with regard to our own ſyſtem, being ignorant of the relations of ſyſtems and things. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being ſuited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future ſtate, that all his happineſs in the preſent depends. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cauſe of Man's error and miſery. The impiety of putting himſelf in the place of God, and judging of the fitneſs or unfitneſs, perfection or imperfection, juſtice or injuſtice of his diſpenſations. The abſurdity of conceiting himſelf the final cauſe of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural. The unreaſonableneſs of his complaints againſt Providence, while, on the one hand, he demands the perfections of the angels; and on the other, the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though to poſſeſs any of the ſenſitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miſerable. That throughout the whole viſible world, an univerſal order and gradation in the ſenſual and mental faculties is obſerved, which cauſes a ſubordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to Man. The gradation of ſenſe, inſtinct, thought, reflection, reaſon; that reaſon alone countervails all the other faculties. How much farther this order and ſubordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation muſt be deſtroyed. The extravagance, madneſs, and pride of ſuch a deſire. The conſequence of all, the abſolute ſubmiſſion due to Providence, both as to our preſent and future ſtate.

AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE I.

AWAKE, my ST. JOHN! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings.
Let us (ſince life can little more ſupply
Than juſt to look about us and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this ſcene of Man;
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiſcuous ſhoot;
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.

Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep, or ſightleſs ſoar;
Eye Nature's walks, ſhoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they riſe;
Laugh where we muſt, be candid where we can;
But vindicate the ways of God to Man.

I. Say firſt, of God above or Man below,
What can we reaſon, but from what we know?
Of Man, what ſee we but his ſtation here,
From which to reaſon, or to which refer?
Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who thro' vaſt immenſity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compoſe one univerſe,

Obſerve how ſyſtem into ſyſtem runs,
What other planets circle other ſuns,
What vary'd being peoples ev'ry ſtar,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
But of this frame, the bearings, and the ties,
The ſtrong connexions, nice dependencies,
Gradations juſt, has thy pervading ſoul
Look'd thro'? or can a part contain the whole?
Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
And drawn ſupports, upheld by God, or thee?

II. Preſumptuous Man! the reaſon wouldſt thou find,
Why form'd ſo weak, ſo little, and ſo blind?
Firſt, if thou canſt, the harder reaſon gueſs,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no leſs.
Aſk of thy mother Earth, why oaks are made
Taller or ſtronger than the weeds they ſhade?

Or aſk of yonder argent fields above,
Why JOVE's ſatellites are leſs than JOVE?
Of ſyſtems poſſible, if 'tis confeſt
That Wiſdom infinite muſt form the beſt,
Where all muſt full or not coherent be,
And all that riſes, riſe in due degree;
Then, in the ſcale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,
There muſt be, ſomewhere, ſuch a rank as Man:
And all the queſtion (wrangle e'er ſo long)
Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong?
Reſpecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
May, muſt be right, as relative to all.
In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain.
A thouſand movements ſcarce one purpoſe gain;
In God's, one ſingle can its end produce;
Yet ſerves to ſecond too ſome other uſe.

So Man, who here ſeems principal alone,
Perhaps acts ſecond to ſome ſphere unknown,
Touches ſome wheel, or verges to ſome goal;
'Tis but a part we ſee, and not a whole.
When the proud ſteed ſhall know why Man reſtrains
His fiery courſe, or drives him o'er the plains;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god:
Then ſhall Man's pride and dulneſs comprehend
His action's, paſſion's, being's uſe and end;
Why doing, ſuff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why
This hour a ſlave, the next a deity.
Then ſay not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge meaſur'd to his ſtate and place,
His time a moment, and a point his ſpace.

If to be perfect in a certain ſphere,
What matter, ſoon or late, or here or there?
The bleſt to-day is as completely ſo,
As who began a thouſand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page preſcrib'd, their preſent ſtate:
From brutes what men, from men what ſpirits know:
Or who could ſuffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reaſon would he ſkip and play?
Pleas'd to the laſt he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand juſt rais'd to ſhed his blood.
Oh blindneſs to the future! kindly giv'n,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who ſees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero periſh, or a ſparrow fall,

Atoms or ſyſtems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burſt, and now a world.
Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions ſoar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore.
What future bliſs, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy bleſſing now.
Hope ſprings eternal in the human breaſt;
Man never Is, but always To be bleſt:
The ſoul, uneaſy and confin'd from home,
Reſts and expatiates in a life to come.
Lo, the poor Indian! whoſe untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His ſoul, proud ſcience never taught to ſtray
Far as the ſolar walk or milky way;
Yet ſimple Nature to his hope has giv'n
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;

Some ſafer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier iſland in the wat'ry waſte,
Where ſlaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Chriſtians thirſt for gold.
To Be, contents his natural deſire,
He aſks no angel's wing, no ſeraph's fire:
But thinks, admitted to that equal ſky,
His faithful dog ſhall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiſer thou! and, in thy ſcale of ſenſe,
Weigh thy opinion againſt Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancy'ſt ſuch,
Say, Here he gives too little, there too much;
Deſtroy all creatures for thy ſport or guſt,
Yet cry, If Man's unhappy, God's unjuſt;
If Man alone ingroſs not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:

Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his juſtice, be the god of God.
In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
All quit their ſphere and ruſh into the ſkies.
Pride ſtill is aiming at the bleſt abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aſpiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aſpiring to be angels, men rebel:
And who but wiſhes to invert the laws
Of ORDER, ſins againſt th' Eternal Cauſe.

V. Aſk for what end the heav'nly bodies ſhine,
Earth for whoſe uſe? Pride anſwers, "'Tis for mine.
"For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
"Suckles each herb, and ſpreads out ev'ry flow'r;
"Annual for me, the grape, the roſe renew
"The juice neƈtareous, and the balmy dew;

" For me, the mine a thouſand treaſures brings;
" For me, health guſhes from a thouſand ſprings;
" Seas roll to waft me, ſuns to light me riſe;
" My footſtool earth, my canopy the ſkies."
But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning ſuns when livid deaths deſcend,
When earthquakes ſwallow, or when tempeſts ſweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
" No ('tis reply'd), the firſt Almighty Cauſe
" Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
" Th' exceptions few; ſome change ſince all began,
" And what created perfect?"—Why then Man?
If the great end be human happineſs,
Then Nature deviates; and can Man do leſs!
As much that end a conſtant courſe requires
Of ſhow'rs and ſunſhine, as of Man's deſires:

As much eternal ſprings and cloudleſs ſkies,
As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wiſe.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's deſign,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
Who knows but He, whoſe hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the ſtorms;
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæſar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon looſe to ſcourge mankind?
From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning ſprings;
Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
Why charge we Heav'n in thoſe, in theſe acquit?
In both, to reaſon right is to ſubmit.
Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never paſſion diſcompos'd the mind.

But ALL ſubſiſts by elemental ſtrife;
And paſſions are the elements of life.
The gen'ral ORDER, ſince the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI. What would this Man? now upward will he ſoar,
And little leſs than angel, would be more!
Now looking downwards, juſt as griev'd appears
To want the ſtrength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his uſe, all creatures if he call,
Say what their uſe, had he the pow'rs of all:
Nature to theſe without profuſion kind,
The proper organs, proper pow'rs aſſign'd;
Each ſeeming want compenſated of courſe,
Here with degrees of ſwiftneſs, there of force:

All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is Heav'n unkind to Man, and Man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleas'd with nothing if not bless'd with all?
The bliss of Man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not Man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, Man is not a fly.
Say what the use were finer optics giv'n,
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?

Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
Die of a roſe in aromatic pain?
If Nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
And ſtunn'd him with the muſic of the ſpheres,
How would he wiſh that Heav'n had left him ſtill
The whiſp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wiſe,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
The ſcale of ſenſual, mental pow'rs aſcends:
Mark how it mounts to Man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled graſs:
What modes of ſight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
Of ſmell, the headlong lioneſs between,
And hound ſagacious on the tainted green:

Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood!
The ſpider's touch, how exquiſitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what ſenſe ſo ſubtly true
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew?
How inſtinct varies in the grov'ling ſwine,
Compar'd, half reas'ning elephant, with thine!
'Twixt that and reaſon, what a nice barrier!
For ever ſep'rate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection how ally'd;
What thin partitions ſenſe from thought divide?
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never paſs th' inſuperable line!
Without this juſt gradation could there be
Subjected, theſe to thoſe, or all to thee?

The pow'rs of all ſubdu'd by thee alone,
Is not thy reaſon all theſe pow'rs in one?

VIII. See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and burſting into birth.
Above, how high, progreſſive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vaſt chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, Man,
Beaſt, bird, fiſh, inſect, what no eye can ſee,
No glaſs can reach; from Infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing.—On ſuperior pow'rs
Were we to preſs, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one ſtep broken, the great ſcale's deſtroy'd:
From Nature's chain whatever link you ſtrike,
Tenth, or ten thouſandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each ſyſtem in gradation roll
Alike eſſential to th' amazing whole,
The leaſt confuſion but in one, not all
That ſyſtem only, but the whole muſt fall.
Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
Planets and ſuns run lawleſs thro' the ſky;
Let ruling angels from their ſpheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And Nature trembles to the throne of God.
All this dread ORDER break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—oh madneſs! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the duſt to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aſpir'd to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
To ſerve mere engines to the ruling mind;

Juſt as abſurd for any part to claim
To be another, in this gen'ral frame:
Juſt as abſurd, to mourn the taſks or pains
The great directing MIND of ALL ordains.

All are but parts of one ſtupendous whole,
Whoſe body Nature is, and God the ſoul;
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the ſame;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame;
Warms in the ſun, refreſhes in the breeze,
Glows in the ſtars, and bloſſoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unſpent;
Breathes in our ſoul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt ſeraph that adores and burns:

To him no high, no low, no great, no ſmall;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

X. Ceaſe then, nor ORDER imperfection name:
Our proper bliſs depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
Of blindneſs, weakneſs, Heav'n beſtows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other ſphere,
Secure to be as bleſt as thou canſt bear:
Safe in the hand of one diſpoſing Pow'r,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All Nature is but art unknown to thee,
All chance, direction which thou canſt not ſee;
All diſcord, harmony not underſtood;
All partial evil, univerſal good:
And, ſpite of pride, in erring reaſon's ſpite,
One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

END OF EPISTLE I.

EPISTLE II.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RESPECT TO HIMSELF, AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

CONTENTS.

THE buſineſs of Man not to pry into God, but to ſtudy himſelf. His middle nature; his powers and frailties. The limits of his capacity. The two principles of man, ſelf-love and reaſon, both neceſſary. Self-love the ſtronger, and why. Their end the ſame. The paſſions, and their uſe. The predominant paſſion, and its force. Its neceſſity, in directing men to different purpoſes. Its providential uſe, in fixing our principle, and aſcertaining our virtue. Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature; the limits near, yet the things ſeparate and evident: what is the office of reaſon. How odious vice in itſelf, and how we deceive ourſelves into it. That, however, the ends of Providence and general good are anſwered in our paſſions and imperfections. How uſefully theſe are diſtributed to all orders of men. How uſeful they are to ſociety, and to individuals, in every ſtate, and every ſtage of life.

AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE II.

I. KNOW then thyſelf, preſume not God to ſcan,
The proper ſtudy of mankind is Man.
Plac'd on this iſthmus of a middle ſtate,
A being darkly wiſe, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic ſide,
With too much weakneſs for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or reſt;
In doubt to deem himſelf a God or beaſt;

In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance his reaſon ſuch,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much;
Chaos of thought and paſſion, all confus'd;
Still by himſelf abus'd, or diſabus'd;
Created half to riſe, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endleſs error hurl'd:
The glory, jeſt, and riddle of the world!
Go, wond'rous creature! mount where ſcience guides,
Go, meaſure earth, weigh air, and ſtate the tides;
Inſtruct the planets in what orbs to run,
Correct old Time, and regulate the ſun;
Go, ſoar with Plato, to th' empyreal ſphere,
To the firſt good, firſt perfect, and firſt fair;

Drawn by T. Stothard R.A. R.H. Cromek sc.

Admir'd such Wisdom in an earthly Shape,
And shew'd a Newton as we shew an Ape.

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Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod;
And quitting ſenſe call imitating God;
As eaſtern prieſts in giddy circles run,
And turn their heads to imitate the ſun.
Go, teach Eternal Wiſdom how to rule——
Then drop into thyſelf, and be a fool!

Superior beings, when of late they ſaw
A mortal Man unfold all Nature's law,
Admir'd ſuch wiſdom in an earthly ſhape,
And ſhew'd a NEWTON as we ſhew an ape.

Could he, whoſe rules the rapid comet bind,
Deſcribe or fix one movement of his mind?
Who ſaw its fires here riſe, and there deſcend,
Explain his own beginning, or his end?
Alas, what wonder! Man's ſuperior part
Uncheck'd may riſe, and climb from art to art;

But when his own great work is but begun,
What reaſon weaves, by paſſion is undone.

Trace ſcience then, with modeſty thy guide;
Firſt ſtrip off all her equipage of pride;
Deduct what is but vanity, or dreſs,
Or learning's luxury, or idleneſs;
Or tricks to ſhew the ſtretch of human brain,
Mere curious pleaſure, or ingenious pain;
Expunge the whole, or lop th' excreſcent parts
Of all our vices have created arts;
Then ſee how little the remaining ſum,
Which ſerv'd the paſt, and muſt the times to come!

II. Two principles in human nature reign;
Self-love, to urge, and reaſon to reſtrain;
Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
Each works its end to move or govern all:

And to their proper operation ſtill,
Aſcribe all good, to their improper, ill.
Self-love, the ſpring of motion, acts the ſoul;
Reaſon's comparing balance rules the whole.
Man, but for that, no action could attend,
And, but for this, were active to no end:
Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar ſpot,
To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;
Or, meteor-like, flame lawleſs thro' the void,
Deſtroying others, by himſelf deſtroy'd.
Moſt ſtrength the moving principle requires;
Active its taſk, it prompts, impels, inſpires:
Sedate and quiet, the comparing lies,
Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and adviſe.
Self-love ſtill ſtronger, as its objects nigh:
Reaſon's at diſtance, and in proſpect lie:

That ſees immediate good by preſent ſenſe;
Reaſon, the future and the conſequence.
Thicker than arguments, temptations throng,
At beſt more watchful this, but that more ſtrong.
The action of the ſtronger to ſuſpend,
Reaſon ſtill uſe, to reaſon ſtill attend.
Attention, habit and experience gains;
Each ſtrengthens reaſon, and ſelf-love reſtrains.
Let ſubtle ſchoolmen teach theſe friends to fight,
More ſtudious to divide than to unite;
And grace and virtue, ſenſe and reaſon ſplit,
With all the raſh dexterity of wit.
Wits, juſt like fools, at war about a name,
Have full as oft no meaning, or the ſame.
Self-love and reaſon to one end aſpire,
Pain their averſion, pleaſure their deſire;

But greedy that, its object would devour,
This taſte the honey, and not wound the flow'r:
Pleaſure, or wrong or rightly underſtood,
Our greateſt evil, or our greateſt good.

III. Modes of ſelf-love the paſſions we may call:
'Tis real good, or ſeeming, moves them all:
But ſince not every good we can divide,
And reaſon bids us for our own provide;
Paſſions, tho' ſelfiſh, if their means be fair,
Liſt under reaſon, and deſerve her care;
Thoſe, that imparted, court a nobler aim,
Exalt their kind, and take ſome virtue's name.

In lazy apathy let Stoics boaſt
Their virtue fix'd; 'tis fix'd as in a froſt;
Contracted all, retiring to the breaſt;
But ſtrength of mind is exerciſe, not reſt:

The riſing tempeſt puts in act the ſoul,
Parts it may ravage, but preſerves the whole.
On life's vaſt ocean diverſely we ſail,
Reaſon the card, but paſſion is the gale;
Nor God alone in the ſtill calm we find,
He mounts the ſtorms, and walks upon the wind.

Paſſions, like elements, tho' born to fight,
Yet, mix'd and ſoften'd, in his work unite:
Theſe, 'tis enough to temper and employ;
But what compoſes Man, can Man deſtroy?
Suffice that reaſon keep to Nature's road,
Subject, compound them, follow her and God.
Love, Hope, and Joy, fair Pleaſure's ſmiling train,
Hate, Fear, and Grief, the family of Pain,
Theſe mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,
Make and maintain the balance of the mind:

The lights and ſhades, whoſe well-accorded ſtrife
Gives all the ſtrength and colour of our life.
Pleaſures are ever in our hands or eyes;
And when, in act, they ceaſe, in proſpect riſe:
Preſent to graſp, and future ſtill to find,
The whole employ of body and of mind.
All ſpread their charms, but charm not all alike;
On diff'rent ſenſes diff'rent objects ſtrike;
Hence diff'rent paſſions more or leſs inflame,
As ſtrong or weak the organs of the frame;
And hence one MASTER PASSION in the breaſt,
Like Aaron's ſerpent, ſwallows up the reſt.
As Man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principle of death;
The young diſeaſe, that muſt ſubdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and ſtrengthens with his ſtrength:

So, caſt and mingled with his very frame,
The mind's diſeaſe, its RULING PASSION came;
Each vital humour which ſhould feed the whole,
Soon flows to this, in body and in ſoul:
Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
As the mind opens, and its functions ſpread,
Imagination plies her dang'rous art,
And pours it all upon the peccant part.

Nature its mother, Habit is its nurſe;
Wit, ſpirit, faculties but make it worſe;
Reaſon itſelf but gives it edge and pow'r;
As heav'n's bleſt beam turns vinegar more ſour.

We, wretched ſubjects tho' to lawful ſway,
In this weak queen ſome fav'rite ſtill obey;
Ah! if ſhe lend not arms, as well as rules,
What can ſhe more than tell us we are fools?

Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,
A ſharp accuſer, but a helpleſs friend!
Or from a judge turn pleader, to perſuade
The choice we make, or juſtify it made;
Proud of an eaſy conqueſt all along,
She but removes weak paſſions for the ſtrong.
So, when ſmall humours gather to a gout,
The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out.

Yes, Nature's road muſt ever be preferr'd;
Reaſon is here no guide, but ſtill a guard;
'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,
And treat this paſſion more as friend than foe:
A mightier pow'r the ſtrong direction ſends,
And ſev'ral Men impels to ſev'ral ends:
Like varying winds, by other paſſions toſt,
This drives them conſtant to a certain coaſt.

Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, pleaſe,
Or (oft more ſtrong than all) the love of eaſe;
Thro' life 'tis follow'd, ev'n at life's expence;
The merchant's toil, the ſage's indolence,
The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
All, all alike, find reaſon on their ſide.

Th' Eternal Art educing good from ill,
Grafts on this paſſion our beſt principle:
'Tis thus the mercury of Man is fix'd,
Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd;
The droſs cements what elſe were too refin'd,
And in one int'reſt body acts with mind.

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
On ſavage ſtocks inſerted learn to bear;
The ſureſt virtues thus from paſſions ſhoot,
Wild Nature's vigor working at the root.

What crops of wit and honeſty appear
From ſpleen, from obſtinacy, hate, or fear!
See anger, zeal and fortitude ſupply;
Ev'n av'rice, prudence; ſloth, philoſophy;
Luſt, thro' ſome certain ſtrainers well refin'd,
Is gentle love, and charms all womankind;
Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a ſlave,
Is emulation in the learn'd or brave;
Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
But what will grow on pride, or grow on ſhame.

Thus Nature gives us (let it check our pride)
The virtue neareſt to our vice ally'd:
Reaſon the bias turns to good from ill,
And Nero reigns a Titus if he will.
The fiery ſoul abhorr'd in Catiline,
In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine:

The ſame ambition can deſtroy or ſave,
And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.
This light and darkneſs in our chaos join'd,
What ſhall divide? The God within the mind.
Extremes in Nature equal ends produce,
In Man they join to ſome myſterious uſe;
Tho' each by turns the other's bounds invade,
As, in ſome well-wrought picture, light and ſhade,
And oft ſo mix, the diff'rence is too nice
Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice.
Fools! who from hence into the notion fall,
That vice or virtue there is none at all.
If white and black blend, ſoften, and unite
A thouſand ways, is there no black or white?
Aſk your own heart, and nothing is ſo plain;
'Tis to miſtake them coſts the time and pain.

Vice is a monſter of ſo frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be ſeen;
Yet ſeen too oft, familiar with her face,
We firſt endure, then pity, then embrace.
But where th' extreme of vice, was ne'er agreed:
Aſk where's the North? at York, 'tis on the Tweed;
In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.
No creature owns it in the firſt degree,
But thinks his neighbour farther gone than he;
Ev'n thoſe who dwell beneath its very zone,
Or never feel the rage, or never own;
What happier natures ſhrink at with affright,
The hard inhabitant contends is right.
Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man muſt be,
Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree:

The rogue and fool, by fits, is fair and wiſe;
And ev'n the beſt, by fits, what they deſpiſe.
'Till but by parts we follow good or ill;
For, vice or virtue, ſelf directs it ſtill;
Each individual ſeeks a ſev'ral goal;
But HEAV'N's great view is one, and that the whole.
That counterworks each folly and caprice;
That diſappoints th' effects of ev'ry vice;
That, happy frailties to all ranks apply'd;
Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,
Fear to the ſtateſman, raſhneſs to the chief,
To kings preſumption, and to crowds belief:
That virtue's ends from vanity can raiſe,
Which ſeeks no int'reſt, no reward but praiſe;
And build on wants, and on defects of mind,
The joy, the peace, the glory of Mankind.

Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
A maſter, or a ſervant, or a friend,
Bids each on other for aſſiſtance call,
'Till one Man's weakneſs grows the ſtrength of all.
Wants, frailties, paſſions, cloſer ſtill ally
The common int'reſt, or endear the tie.
To theſe we owe true friendſhip, love ſincere,
Each home-felt joy that life inherits here;
Yet from the ſame we learn, in its decline,
Thoſe joys, thoſe loves, thoſe int'reſts to reſign;
Taught half by reaſon, half by mere decay,
To welcome death, and calmly paſs away.

Whate'er the paſſion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,
Not one will change his neighbour with himſelf.
The learn'd is happy Nature to explore,
The fool is happy that he knows no more;

The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n,
The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n.
See the blind beggar dance, the cripple ſing,
The ſot a hero, lunatic a king;
The ſtarving chemiſt in his golden views
Supremely bleſt, the poet in his Muſe.
See ſome ſtrange comfort ev'ry ſtate attend,
And pride beſtow'd on all, a common friend:
See ſome fit paſſion ev'ry age ſupply,
Hope travels thro', nor quits us when we die.
Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a ſtraw:
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite:
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuſe his riper ſtage,
And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age:

Pleas'd with this bauble ſtill, as that before;
'Till tir'd he ſleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.
Mean while opinion gilds with varying rays
Thoſe painted clouds that beautify our days;
Each want of happineſs by hope ſupply'd,
And each vacuity of ſenſe by pride:
Theſe build as faſt as knowledge can deſtroy;
In folly's cup ſtill laughs the bubble joy;
One proſpect loſt, another ſtill we gain;
And not a vanity is given in vain:
Ev'n mean ſelf-love becomes, by force divine,
The ſcale to meaſure others wants by thine.
See! and confeſs, one comfort ſtill muſt riſe;
'Tis this, tho' Man's a fool, yet GOD IS WISE.

END OF EPISTLE II.

END OF EPISTLE II.

EPISTLE III.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RESPECT TO SOCIETY.

CONTENTS.

THE whole univerſe one ſyſtem of ſociety. Nothing made wholly for itſelf, nor yet wholly for another. The happineſs of animals mutual. Reaſon or inſtinct operate alike to the good of each individual. Reaſon or inſtinct operate alſo to ſociety in all animals. How far ſociety carried by inſtinct. How much farther by reaſon. Of that which is called the ſtate of Nature. Reaſon inſtructed by inſtinct in the invention of arts. And in the forms of ſociety. Origin of political ſocieties. Origin of monarchy. Patriarchal government. Origin of true religion and government, from the ſame principle of love. Origin of ſuperſtition and tyranny from the ſame principle of fear. The influence of ſelf-love operating to the ſocial and public good. Reſtoration of true religion and government on their firſt principle. Mixt government. Various forms of each, and the true end of all.

AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE III.

I. HERE then we reſt: "The Univerſal Cauſe
"Acts to one end, but acts by various laws."
In all the madneſs of ſuperfluous health,
The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,
Let this great truth be preſent night and day:
But moſt be preſent if we preach or pray.

Look round our world, behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.

See plaſtic Nature working to this end,
The ſingle atoms each to other tend,
Attract, attracted to, the next in place
Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.
See matter next, with various life endu'd,
Preſs to one centre ſtill, the gen'ral good.
See dying vegetables life ſuſtain,
See life diſſolving vegetate again:
All forms that periſh other forms ſupply,
(By turns we catch the vital breath and die)
Like bubbles on the ſea of matter borne,
They riſe, they break, and to that ſea return.
Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
One all-extending, all-preſerving ſoul
Connects each being, greateſt with the leaſt;
Made beaſt in aid of Man, and Man of beaſt;

All ſerv'd, all ſerving: nothing ſtands alone;
The chain holds on, and where it ends unknown.

Has God, thou fool! work'd ſolely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy paſtime, thy attire, thy food?
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
For him as kindly ſpreads the flow'ry lawn:
Is it for thee the lark aſcends and ſings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
Loves of his own and raptures ſwell the note.
The bounding ſteed you pompouſly beſtride,
Shares with his lord the pleaſure and the pride.
Is thine alone the ſeed that ſtrews the plain?
The birds of heav'n ſhall vindicate their grain.
Thine the full harveſt of the golden year?
Part pays, and juſtly, the deſerving ſteer;

The hog, that ploughs not nor obeys thy call,
Lives on the labours of this lord of all.
Know, Nature's children all divide her care;
The fur that warms a monarch warm'd a bear.
While Man exclaims, "See all things for my uſe!"
"See man for mine!" replies a pamper'd gooſe:
And juſt as ſhort of reaſon he muſt fall,
Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the pow'rful ſtill the weak control;
Be Man the wit, and tyrant of the whole:
Nature that tyrant checks; he only knows,
And helps, another creature's wants and woes.
Say, will the falcon, ſtooping from above,
Smit with her varying plumage, ſpare the dove?
Admires the jay the inſect's gilded wings?
Or hears the hawk when Philomela ſings?

Man cares for all: to birds he gives his woods,
To beaſts his paſtures, and to fiſh his floods.
For ſome his int'reſt prompts him to provide,
For more his pleaſure, yet for more his pride:
All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy
Th' extenſive bleſſing of his luxury,
That very life his learned hunger craves,
He ſaves from famine, and the ſavage ſaves;
Nay, feaſts the animal he dooms his feaſt,
And, 'till he ends the being, makes it bleſt;
Which ſees no more the ſtroke, nor feels the pain,
Than favour'd Man by touch ethereal ſlain.
The creature had his feaſt of life before;
Thou too muſt periſh, when thy feaſt is o'er!
To each unthinking being, Heav'n a friend,
Gives not the uſeleſs knowledge of its end:

To man imparts it; but with ſuch a view
As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too;
The hour conceal'd and ſo remote the fear,
Death ſtill draws nearer, never ſeeming near.
Great ſtanding miracle! that Heav'n aſſign'd
Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

II. Whether with reaſon, or with inſtinct bleſt,
Know, all enjoy that pow'r which ſuits them beſt:
To bliſs alike by that direction tend,
And find the means proportion'd to their end.
Say, where full inſtinct is th' unerring guide,
What pope or council can they need beſide?
Reaſon, however able, cool at beſt,
Cares not for ſervice, or but ſerves when preſt,
Stays till we call, and then not often near;
But honeſt inſtinct comes a volunteer,

Sure never to o'erſhoot, but juſt to hit;
While ſtill too wide or ſhort is human wit;
Sure by quick Nature happineſs to gain,
Which heavier reaſon labours at in vain.
This too ſerves always, reaſon never long;
One muſt go right, the other may go wrong.
See then the acting and comparing pow'rs
One in their nature, which are two in ours;
And reaſon raiſe o'er inſtinct as you can,
In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis Man.
Who taught the nations of the field and wood
To ſhun their poiſon, and to chooſe their food?
Preſcient, the tides or tempeſts to withſtand,
Build on the wave, or arch beneath the ſand?
Who made the ſpider parallels deſign,
Sure as DEMOIVRE, without rule or line?

Who bid the ſtork, Columbus-like, explore
Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before?
Who calls the council, ſtates the certain day,
Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

III. God, in the nature of each being, founds
Its proper bliſs, and ſets its proper bounds:
But as he fram'd a whole, the whole to bleſs,
On mutual wants built mutual happineſs:
So from the firſt, eternal ORDER ran,
And creature link'd to creature, Man to Man.
Whate'er of life all quick'ning ether keeps,
Or breathes thro' air, or ſhoots beneath the deeps,
Or pours profuſe on earth, one nature feeds
The vital flame, and ſwells the genial ſeeds.
Not Man alone, but all that roam the wood,
Or wing the ſky, or roll along the flood,

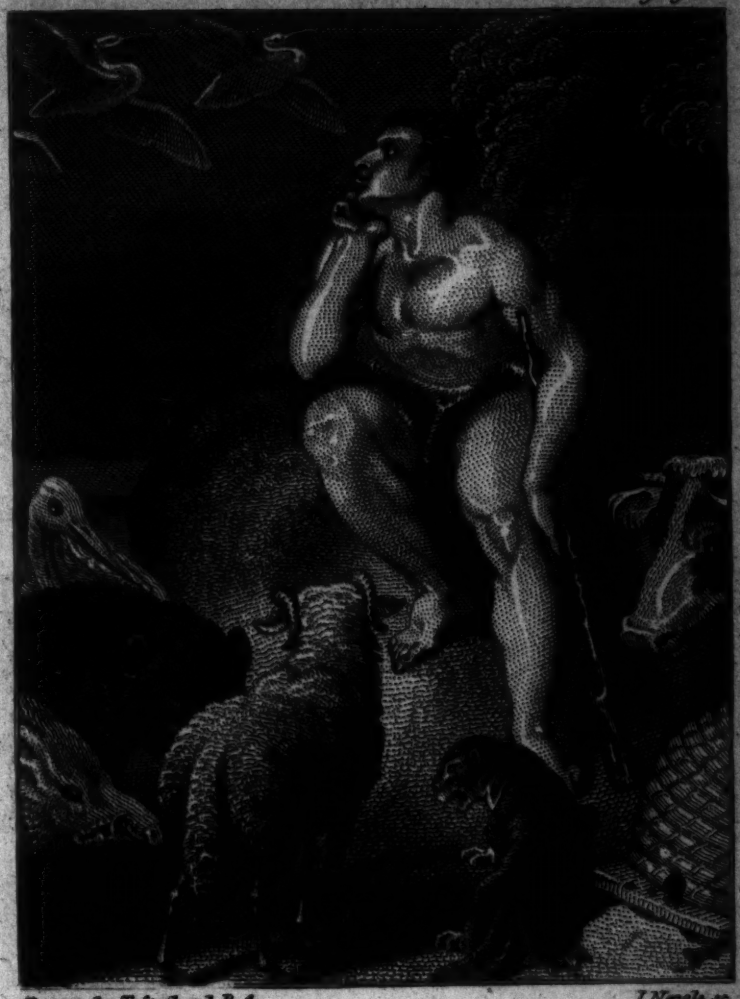
Each loves itſelf, but not itſelf alone,
Each ſex deſires alike, 'till two are one.
Nor ends the pleaſure with the fierce embrace;
They love themſelves a third time in their race.
Thus beaſt and bird their common charge attend,
The mothers nurſe it, and the ſires defend;
The young diſmiſs'd to wander earth or air,
There ſtops the inſtinct, and there ends the care:
The link diſſolves, each ſeeks a freſh embrace,
Another love ſucceeds, another race.
A longer care Man's helpleſs kind demands;
That longer care contracts more laſting bands:
Reflection, reaſon, ſtill the ties improve,
At once extend the int'reſt, and the love;
With choice we fix, with ſympathy we burn;
Each virtue in each paſſion takes its turn;

And ſtill new needs, new helps, new habits riſe,
That graft benevolence on charities.
Still as one brood, and as another roſe,
Theſe nat'ral love maintain'd, habitual thoſe:
The laſt ſcarce ripen'd into perfect Man,
Saw helpleſs him from whom their life began:
Mem'ry and forecaſt juſt returns engage,
That pointed back to youth, this on to age;
While pleaſure, gratitude, and hope combin'd,
Still ſpread the int'reſt, and preſerv'd the kind.

IV. Nor think, in Nature's ſtate they blindly trod;
The ſtate of Nature was the reign of God:
Self-love and ſocial at her birth began,
Union the bond of all things, and of Man.
Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
Man walk'd with beaſt, joint tenant of the ſhade;

The ſame his table, and the ſame his bed;
No murder cloath'd him, and no murder fed.
In the ſame temple, the reſounding wood,
All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God:
The ſhrine with gore unſtain'd, with gold undreſt,
Unbrib'd, unbloody, ſtood the blameleſs prieſt:
Heav'n's attribute was Univerſal Care,
And Man's prerogative to rule, but ſpare.
Ah! how unlike the Man of times to come!
Of half that live the butcher and the tomb;
Who, foe to Nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
Murders their ſpecies, and betrays his own.
But juſt diſeaſe to luxury ſucceeds,
And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds;
The Fury-paſſions from that blood began,
And turn'd on Man a fiercer ſavage, Man.

See him from Nature riſing ſlow to art!
To copy inſtinct then was reaſon's part;
Thus then to Man the voice of Nature ſpake—
"Go, from the creatures thy inſtructions take:
"Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
"Learn from the beaſts the phyſic of the field;
"Thy arts of building from the bee receive;
"Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;
"Learn of the little Nautilus to ſail,
"Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.
"Here too all forms of ſocial union find,
"And hence let reaſon, late, inſtruct Mankind:
"Here ſubterranean works and cities ſee;
"There towns aërial on the waving tree.
"Learn each ſmall people's genius, policies,
"The ant's republic, and the realm of bees:



Drawn. by T. Stothard R.A. I. Neagle sc.

Thus then to Man the Voice of Nature spake.
"Go, from the Creatures thy Instructions take."

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" How thoſe in common all their wealth beſtow,
" And anarchy without confuſion know;
" And theſe for ever, tho' a monarch reign,
" Their ſep'rate cells and properties maintain.
" Mark what unvary'd laws preſerve each ſtate,
" Laws wiſe as Nature, and as fix'd as fate.
" In vain thy reaſon finer webs ſhall draw,
" Entangle juſtice in her net of law,
" And right, too rigid, harden into wrong;
" Still for the ſtrong too weak, the weak too ſtrong.
" Yet go! and thus o'er all the creatures ſway,
" Thus let the wiſer make the reſt obey;
" And for thoſe arts mere inſtinct could afford,
" Be crown'd as monarchs, or as gods ador'd."

V. Great Nature ſpoke; obſervant Man obey'd;
Cities were built, ſocieties were made:

Here roſe one little ſtate; another near
Grew by like means, and join'd, thro' love or fear.
Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,
And there the ſtreams in purer rills deſcend?
What war could raviſh, commerce could beſtow,
And he return'd a friend, who came a foe.
Converſe and love Mankind might ſtrongly draw,
When love was liberty and Nature law.
Thus ſtates were form'd; the name of king unknown,
Till common int'reſt plac'd the ſway in one.
'Twas virtue only (or in arts or arms,
Diffuſing bleſſings, or averting harms),
The ſame which in a ſire the ſons obey'd,
A prince the father of a people made.

VI. Till then, by Nature crown'd, each patriarch ſate,
King, prieſt, and parent of his growing ſtate;

On him, their ſecond Providence, they hung,
Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.
He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,
Taught to command the fire, control the flood,
Draw forth the monſters of the abyſs profound,
Or fetch th' aërial eagle to the ground.
Till drooping, ſick'ning, dying they began
Whom they rever'd as God to mourn as Man:
Then, looking up from ſire to ſire, explor'd
One great firſt Father, and that firſt ador'd.
Or plain tradition, that this all begun,
Convey'd unbroken faith from ſire to ſon;
The Worker from the work diſtinct was known,
And ſimple reaſon never ſought but one:
Ere wit oblique had broke that ſteady light,
Man, like his Maker, ſaw that all was right;

To virtue, in the paths of pleaſure trod,
And own'd a father when he own'd a God.
Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then;
For Nature knew no right divine in Men,
No ill could fear in God; and underſtood
A ſov'reign being but a ſov'reign good.
(True faith, true policy, united ran,)
That was but love of God, and this of Man.

Who firſt taught ſouls enſlav'd, and realms undone,
Th' enormous faith of many made for one;
That proud exception to all Nature's laws,
T' invert the world, and counterwork its cauſe?
Force firſt made conqueſt, and that conqueſt law;
Till ſuperſtition taught the tyrant awe,
Then ſhar'd the tyranny, then lent it aid,
And gods of conqu'rors, ſlaves of ſubjects made:

She 'midſt the light'ning's blaze, and thunder's ſound,
When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the ground,
She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,
To Pow'r unſeen, and mightier far than they:
She, from the rending earth and burſting ſkies,
Saw gods deſcend, and fiends infernal riſe:
Here fix'd the dreadful, there the bleſt abodes;
Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods;
Gods partial, changeful, paſſionate, unjuſt,
Whoſe attributes were rage, revenge, or luſt;
Such as the ſouls of cowards might conceive,
And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe.
Zeal then, not charity, became the guide;
And hell was built on ſpite, and heav'n on pride.
Then ſacred ſeem'd th' ethereal vault no more;
Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore:

Then firſt the Flamen taſted living food;
Next his grim idol ſmear'd with human blood;
With Heav'n's own thunders ſhook the world below,
And play'd the god an engine on his foe.
So drives ſelf-love, thro' juſt, and thro' unjuſt,
To one Man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, luſt:
The ſame ſelf-love, in all, becomes the cauſe
Of what reſtrains him, government and laws.
For what one likes, if others like as well,
What ſerves one will, when many wills rebel?
How ſhall he keep, what, ſleeping or awake,
A weaker may ſurpriſe, a ſtronger take?
His ſafety muſt his liberty reſtrain:
All join to guard what each deſires to gain.
Forc'd into virtue thus by ſelf-defence,
Ev'n kings learnt juſtice and benevolence:

Self-love forſook the path it firſt purſu'd,
And found the private in the public good.
'Twas then, the ſtudious head or gen'rous mind,
Follow'r of God or friend of human-kind,
Poet or patriot, roſe but to reſtore
The faith and moral, Nature gave before;
Relum'd her ancient light, not kindled new;
If not God's image, yet his ſhadow drew:
Taught pow'r's due uſe to people and to kings:
Taught not to ſlack, nor ſtrain its tender ſtrings,
The leſs, or greater, ſet ſo juſtly true,
That touching one muſt ſtrike the other too;
Till jarring int'reſts of themſelves create
Th' according muſic of a well-mix'd ſtate.
Such is the world's great harmony, that ſprings
From order, union, full conſent of things:

Where ſmall and great, where weak and mighty made
To ſerve, not ſuffer, ſtrengthen, not invade;
More pow'rful each as needful to the reſt,
And in proportion as it bleſſes, bleſt;
Draw to one point, and to one centre bring
Beaſt, Man, or angel, ſervant, lord, or king.

For forms of government let fools conteſt;
Whate'er is beſt adminiſter'd is beſt:
For modes of faith let graceleſs zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whoſe life is in the right:
In faith and hope the world will diſagree,
But all Mankind's concern is charity:
All muſt be falſe that thwart this one great end;
And, all of God, that bleſs Mankind or mend.

Man, like the gen'rous vine, ſupported lives;
The ſtrength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.

On their own axis as the planets run,
Yet make at once their circle round the ſun:
So two conſiſtent motions act the ſoul;
And one regards itſelf, and one the whole.
Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
And bade ſelf-love and ſocial be the ſame.

END OF EPISTLE III.

EPISTLE IV.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RESPECT TO HAPPINESS.

CONTENTS.

FALSE notions of happineſs, philoſophical and popular, anſwered. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all. God intends happineſs to be equal; and to be ſo, it muſt be ſocial, ſince all particular happineſs depends on general, and ſince he governs by general, not particular laws. As it is neceſſary for order, and the peace and welfare of ſociety, that external goods ſhould be unequal, happineſs is not made to conſiſt in theſe. But, notwithſtanding that inequality, the balance of happineſs among Mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two paſſions of hope and fear. What the happineſs of individuals is, as far as is conſiſtent with the conſtitution of this world; and that the good Man has here the advantage. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of Nature, or of fortune. The folly of expecting that God ſhould alter his general laws in favour of particulars. That we are not judges who are good; but that, whoever they are, they muſt be happieſt. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconſiſtent with, or deſtructive of virtue. That even theſe can make no man happy without virtue. Inſtanced in riches. In honours. Nobility. Greatneſs. Fame. Superior talents. With pictures of human infelicity in Men poſſeſt of them all. That virtue only conſtitutes a happineſs, whoſe object is univerſal, and whoſe proſpect eternal. That the perfection of virtue and happineſs conſiſts in a conformity to the ORDER of PROVIDENCE here, and a reſignation to it here and hereafter.

AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE IV.

OH Happineſs! our being's end and aim,
Good, pleaſure, eaſe, content! whate'er thy name:
That ſomething ſtill which prompts th' eternal ſigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die;
Which ſtill ſo near us, yet beyond us lies,
O'erlook'd, ſeen double, by the fool, and wiſe:
Plant of celeſtial ſeed! if dropt below,
Say, in what mortal ſoil thou deign'ſt to grow?

Fair op'ning to ſome court's propitious ſhine,
Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine?
Twin'd with the wreaths Parnaſſian laurels yield,
Or reap'd in iron harveſts of the field?
Where grows?—where grows it not? If vain our toil,
We ought to blame the culture, not the ſoil:
Fix'd to no ſpot is happineſs ſincere,
'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where:
'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
And fled from monarchs, St. John! dwells with thee.
Aſk of the learn'd the way? The learn'd are blind;
This bids to ſerve, and that to ſhun Mankind;
Some place the bliſs in action, ſome in eaſe,
Thoſe call it pleaſure, and contentment theſe;
Some ſunk to beaſts, find pleaſure end in pain;
Some ſwell'd to gods, confeſs e'en virtue vain;

Or indolent, to each extreme they fall,
To truſt in ev'ry thing, or doubt of all.
Who thus define it, ſay they more or leſs
Than this, that happineſs is happineſs?
Take Nature's path, and mad opinion's leave;
All ſtates can reach it, and all heads conceive;
Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell;
There needs but thinking right, and meaning well;
And mourn our various portions as we pleaſe,
Equal is common ſenſe, and common eaſe.
Remember, Man, "the Univerſal Cauſe
"Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;"
And makes what happineſs we juſtly call,
Subſiſt, not in the good of one, but all.
There's not a bleſſing individuals find,
But ſome way leans and hearkens to the kind;

No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
No cavern'd hermit reſts ſelf-ſatisfy'd:
Who moſt to ſhun or hate Mankind pretend,
Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend:
Abſtract what others feel, what others think,
All pleaſures ſicken, and all glories ſink:
Each has his ſhare; and who would more obtain,
Shall find, the pleaſure pays not half the pain.

Order is Heav'n's firſt law; and this confeſt,
Some are, and muſt be, greater than the reſt,
More rich, more wiſe; but who infers from hence
That ſuch are happier, ſhocks all common ſenſe.
Heav'n to Mankind impartial we confeſs,
If all are equal in their happineſs:
But mutual wants this happineſs increaſe;
All Nature's diff'rence keeps all Nature's peace.

Condition, circumſtance is not the thing;
Bliſs is the ſame in ſubject or in king,
In who obtain defence, or who defend,
In him who is, or him who finds a friend:
Heav'n breathes thro' ev'ry member of the whole
One common bleſſing, as one common ſoul.
But fortune's gifts if each alike poſſeſt,
And each were equal, muſt not all conteſt?
If then to all Men happineſs was meant,
God in externals could not place content.
Fortune her gifts may variouſly diſpoſe,
And theſe be happy call'd, unhappy thoſe;
But Heav'n's juſt balance equal will appear,
While thoſe are plac'd in hope, and theſe in fear:
Not preſent good or ill, the joy or curſe,
But future views of better, or of worſe.

Oh ſons of earth! attempt ye ſtill to riſe,
By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the ſkies?
Heav'n ſtill with laughter the vain toil ſurveys,
And buries madmen in the heaps they raiſe.
Know, all the good that individuals find,
Or God and Nature meant to mere Mankind,
Reaſon's whole pleaſure, all the joys of ſenſe,
Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence.
But health conſiſts with temperance alone;
And peace, oh virtue! peace is all thy own.
The good or bad the gifts of Fortune gain;
But theſe leſs taſte them, as they worſe obtain.
Say, in purſuit of profit or delight,
Who riſk the moſt, that take wrong means or right?
Of vice or virtue, whether bleſt or curſt,
Which meets contempt, or which compaſſion firſt?

Count all th' advantage proſp'rous vice attains,
'Tis but what virtue flies from and diſdains:
And grant the bad what happineſs they wou'd,
One they muſt want, which is to paſs for good.

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole ſcheme below,
Who fancy bliſs to vice, to virtue woe!
Who ſees and follows that great ſcheme the beſt,
Beſt knows the bleſſing, and will moſt be bleſt.
But fools the good alone, unhappy call,
For ills or accidents that chance to all.
See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the juſt!
See god-like Turenne proſtrate on the duſt!
See Sidney bleeds amid the martial ſtrife!
Was this their virtue, or contempt of life?
Say, was it virtue, more tho' Heav'n ne'er gave,
Lamented Digby! ſunk thee to the grave?

Tell me, if virtue made the ſon expire,
Why, full of days and honour, lives the ſire?
Why drew Marſeilles' good biſhop purer breath,
When Nature ſicken'd, and each gale was death?
Or why ſo long (in life if long can be)
Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me?
What makes all phyſical or moral ill?
There deviates Nature, and here wanders will.
God ſends not ill; if rightly underſtood,
Or partial ill is univerſal good,
Or change admits, or Nature lets it fall;
Short, and but rare, till Man improv'd it all.
We juſt as wiſely might of Heav'n complain,
That righteous Abel was deſtroy'd by Cain,
As that the virtuous ſon is ill at eaſe
When his lewd father gave the dire diſeaſe.

Think we like ſome weak prince, th' Eternal Cauſe,
Prone for his fav'rites to reverſe his laws?
Shall burning Ætna, if a ſage requires,
Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?
On air or ſea new motions be impreſt,
Oh blameleſs Bethel! to relieve thy breaſt?
When the looſe mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation ceaſe if you go by?
Or ſome old temple, nodding to its fall,
For Chartres' head reſerve the hanging wall?
But ſtill this world (ſo fitted for the knave)
Contents us not. A better ſhall we have?
A kingdom of the juſt then let it be:
But firſt conſider how thoſe juſt agree.
The good muſt merit God's peculiar care;
But who, but God, can tell us who they are?

One thinks on Calvin Heav'n's own Spirit fell;
Another deems him inſtrument of hell;
If Calvin feel Heav'n's bleſſing, or its rod,
This cries there is, and that, there is no God.
What ſhocks one part will edify the reſt,
Nor with one ſyſtem can they all be bleſt.
The very beſt will variouſly incline,
And what rewards your virtue, puniſh mine.
WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.—This world, 'tis true,
Was made for Cæſar—but for Titus too:
And which more bleſt? who chain'd his country, ſay,
Or he whoſe virtue ſigh'd to loſe a day?
"But ſometimes virtue ſtarves, while vice is fed,"
What then? Is the reward of virtue bread?
That, vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
The knave deſerves it, when he tills the ſoil,

Drawn by T. Stothard R.A. B.H. Cromek sc

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy.
The Soul's calm Sunshine, and the heart-felt Joy.
Is Virtue's Prize.

Published March 1.1797. by Cadell and Davies Strand.

The knave deſerves it, when he tempts the main,
Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.
The good man may be weak, be indolent;
Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.
But grant him riches, your demand is o'er?
"No—ſhall the good want health, the good want pow'r?"
Add health, and power, and ev'ry earthly thing,
"Why bounded pow'r? why private? why no king?
"Nay, why external for internal giv'n?
"Why is not man a god, and earth a heav'n?"
Who aſk and reaſon thus, will ſcarce conceive
God gives enough while he has more to give:
Immenſe the pow'r, immenſe were the demand;
Say, at what part of Nature will they ſtand?
What nothing earthly gives, or can deſtroy,
The ſoul's calm ſun-ſhine, and the heart-felt joy,

Is virtue's prize: a better would you fix,
Then give humility a coach and ſix,
Juſtice a conq'ror's ſword, or truth a gown,
Or public ſpirit its great cure, a crown.
Weak, fooliſh Man! will Heav'n reward us there,
With the ſame traſh mad mortals wiſh for here?
The boy and Man an individual makes,
Yet ſigh'ſt thou now for apples and for cakes?
Go, like the Indian, in another life
Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife:
As well as dream ſuch trifles are aſſign'd,
As toys and empires, for a god-like mind.
Rewards, that either would to virtue bring
No joy, or be deſtructive of the thing:
How oft by theſe at ſixty are undone
The virtues of a ſaint at twenty-one!

To whom can riches give repute or truſt,
Content, or pleaſure, but the good and juſt?
Judges and ſenates have been bought for gold,
Eſteem and love were never to be ſold.
Oh fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
The lover and the love of human kind,
Whoſe life is healthful, and whoſe conſcience clear,
Becauſe he wants a thouſand pounds a year.
Honour and ſhame from no condition riſe;
Act well your part, there all the honour lies.
Fortune in Men has ſome ſmall diff'rence made,
One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade;
The cobler apron'd, and the parſon gown'd,
The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.
"What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl?"
I'll tell you, friend; a wiſe Man and a fool.

You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
Or, cobler-like, the parſon will be drunk,
Worth makes the Man, and want of it the fellow;
The reſt is all but leather or prunello.
Stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with ſtrings,
That thou may'ſt be by kings, or whores of kings.
Boaſt the pure blood of an illuſtrious race,
In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece:
But by your father's worth if your's you rate,
Count me thoſe only who were good and great.
Go! if your ancient, but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' ſcoundrels ever ſince the flood,
Go! and pretend your family is young;
Nor own your fathers have been fools ſo long.
What can ennoble ſots, or ſlaves, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on greatneſs; ſay where greatneſs lies.
"Where, but among the heroes and the wiſe!"
Heroes are much the ſame, the point's agreed,
From Macedonia's madman to the Swede;
The whole ſtrange purpoſe of their lives to find
Or make an enemy of all mankind!
Not one looks backward, onward ſtill he goes,
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his noſe.
No leſs alike the politic and wiſe;
All ſly ſlow things, with circumſpective eyes:
Men in their looſe unguarded hours they take,
Not that themſelves are wiſe, but others weak.
But grant that thoſe can conquer, theſe can cheat;
'Tis phraſe abſurd to call a villain great:
Who wickedly is wiſe, or madly brave,
Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.

Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing, ſmiles in exile or in chains,
Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed
Like Socrates, that Man is great indeed.

What's fame? a fancy'd life in others breath,
A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.
Juſt what you hear, you have, and what's unknown
The ſame (my lord) if Tully's, or your own.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the ſmall circle of our foes or friends;
To all beſide as much an empty ſhade
An Eugene living, as a Cæſar dead;
Alike or when, or where, they ſhone or ſhine,
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
An honeſt Man's the nobleſt work of God.

Fame but from death a villain's name can ſave,
As juſtice tears his body from the grave;
When what t' oblivion better were reſign'd,
Is hung on high, to poiſon half mankind.
All fame is foreign, but of true deſert;
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart:
One ſelf-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of ſtupid ſtarers, and of loud huzzas;
And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
Than Cæſar with a ſenate at his heels.
In parts ſuperior what advantage lies?
Tell (for you can) what is it to be wiſe?
'Tis but to know how little can be known;
To ſee all others faults, and feel our own;
Condemn'd in buſ'neſs or in arts to drudge,
Without a ſecond, or without a judge:

Truths would you teach, or ſave a ſinking land?
All fear, none aid you, and few underſtand.
Painful pre-eminence! yourſelf to view
Above life's weakneſs, and its comforts too.

Bring then theſe bleſſings to a ſtrict account;
Make fair deductions; ſee to what they 'mount:
How much of other each is ſure to coſt;
How each for other oft is wholly loſt;
How inconſiſtent greater goods with theſe;
How ſometimes life is riſqu'd, and always eaſe:
Think, and if ſtill the things thy envy call,
Say, wouldſt thou be the man to whom they fall?
To ſigh for ribbands if thou art ſo filly,
Mark how they grace lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.
Is yellow dirt the paſſion of thy life?
Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife.

If parts allure thee, think how Bacon ſhin'd,
The wiſeſt, brighteſt, meaneſt of mankind:
Or raviſh'd with the whiſtling of a name,
See Cromwell, damn'd to everlaſting fame!
If all, united, thy ambition call,
From ancient ſtory learn to ſcorn them all.
There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
See the falſe ſcale of happineſs complete!
In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,
How happy thoſe to ruin, theſe betray!
Mark by what wretched ſteps their glory grows,
From dirt and ſea-weed as proud Venice roſe.
In each how guilt and greatneſs equal ran,
And all that rais'd the hero ſunk the Man:
Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold,
But ſtain'd with blood, or ill-exchang'd for gold:

Then ſee them broke with toils, or ſunk in eaſe,
Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.
Oh wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame
E'er taught to ſhine, or ſanctified from ſhame!
What greater bliſs attends their cloſe of life?
Some greedy minion, or imperious wife;
The trophy'd arches, ſtory'd halls invade,
And haunt their ſlumbers in the pompous ſhade.
Alas! not dazzled with their noon-tide ray,
Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day;
The whole amount of that enormous fame,
A tale, that blends their glory with their ſhame!

Know then this truth (enough for man to know),
"Virtue alone is happineſs below."
The only point where human bliſs ſtands ſtill,
And taſtes the good without the fall to ill;

Where only merit conſtant pay receives,
Is bleſt in what it takes, and what it gives;
The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain,
And if it loſe, attended with no pain:
Without ſatiety, tho' e'er ſo bleſt,
And but more reliſh'd as the more diſtreſs'd:
The broadeſt mirth unfeeling folly wears,
Leſs pleaſing far than virtue's very tears:
Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd,
For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd;
Never elated, while one Man's oppreſs'd;
Never dejected, while another's bleſt;
And where no wants, no wiſhes can remain,
Since but to wiſh more virtue, is to gain.
See the ſole bliſs Heav'n could on all beſtow!
Which who but feels can taſte, but thinks can know;

Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
The bad muſt miſs; the good, untaught, will find;
Slave to no ſect, who takes no private road,
But looks thro' Nature up to Nature's God;
Purſues that chain which links th' immenſe deſign,
Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine;
Sees, that no being any bliſs can know,
But touches ſome above and ſome below;
Learns from this union of the riſing whole,
The firſt, laſt purpoſe of the human ſoul;
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end, in Love of God, and Love of Man.
For him alone hope leads from goal to goal,
And opens ſtill, and opens on his ſoul;
Till lengthen'd on to faith, and unconfin'd,
It pours the bliſs that fills up all the mind.

He ſees why Nature plants in Man alone
Hope of known bliſs, and faith in bliſs unknown:
(Nature, whoſe dictates to no other kind
Are giv'n in vain, but what they ſeek they find)
Wiſe is her preſent; ſhe connects in this
His greateſt virtue with his greateſt bliſs;
At once his own bright proſpect to be bleſt,
And ſtrongeſt motive to aſſiſt the reſt.

Self-love thus puſh'd to ſocial, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's bleſſing thine.
Is this too little for the boundleſs heart?
Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
Graſp the whole worlds of reaſon, life, and ſenſe,
In one cloſe ſyſtem of benevolence:
Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of bliſs but height of charity.

God loves from whole to parts: but human ſoul
Muſt riſe from individual to the whole.
Self-love but ſerves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the ſmall pebble ſtirs the peaceful lake;
The centre mov'd, a circle ſtraight ſucceeds,
Another ſtill, and ſtill another ſpreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, firſt it will embrace;
His country next; and next all human race;
Wide and more wide th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind;
Earth ſmiles around, with boundleſs bounty bleſt,
And Heav'n beholds its image in his breaſt.

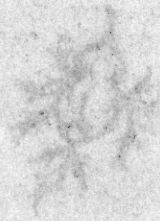
Come then, my friend! my genius! come along,
Oh maſter of the poet, and the ſong!
And while the Muſe now ſtoops, or now aſcends,
To Man's low paſſions, or their glorious ends,

Teach me, like thee in various Nature wiſe,
To fall with dignity, with temper riſe;
Form'd by thy converſe, happily to ſteer
From grave to gay, from lively to ſevere;
Correct with ſpirit, eloquent with eaſe,
Intent to reaſon, or polite to pleaſe.
Oh! while along the ſtream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame;
Say, ſhall my little bark attendant ſail,
Purſue the triumph, and partake the gale?
When ſtateſmen, heroes, kings, in duſt repoſe,
Whoſe ſons ſhall bluſh their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verſe to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philoſopher, and friend?
That, urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
From ſounds to things, from fancy to the heart;

For wit's falſe mirror held up Nature's light;
Shew'd erring pride, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT;
That REASON, PASSION, anſwer one great aim;
That true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the ſame;
That VIRTUE only makes our bliſs below;
And all our knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

DEO OPT. MAX.



THE

UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

DEO OPT. MAX.

FATHER of all! in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime ador'd,
By ſaint, by ſavage, and by ſage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great Firſt Cauſe, leaſt underſtood:
Who all my ſenſe confin'd
To know but this, that Thou art Good,
And that myſelf am blind;

Yet gave me in this dark eſtate,
To ſee the good from ill;
And binding Nature faſt in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conſcience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This teach me more than hell to ſhun,
That, more than heav'n purſue.

What bleſſings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not caſt away;
For God is paid when Man receives:
T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted ſpan
Thy goodneſs let me bound,
Or think Thee Lord alone of Man,
When thouſand worlds are round:

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Preſume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to ſtay;
If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy Wisdom has deny'd,
Or aught thy Goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

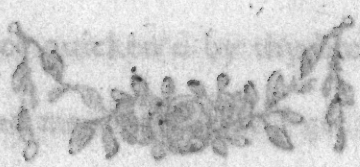
Mean tho' I am, not wholly so,
Since quicken'd by thy breath:
Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,
Thro' this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot:
All elſe beneath the ſun,
Thou know'ſt if beſt beſtow'd or not,
And let thy will be done.

To Thee, whoſe temple is all ſpace,
Whoſe altar, earth, ſea, ſkies!
One chorus let all being raiſe;
All Nature's incenſe riſe!

Thirdly—be bread and peace my lot:
All else beneath the sun,
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not,
And let thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!
One chorus let all being raise!
All Nature's incense rise!



THE

DYING CHRISTIAN

TO HIS SOUL.

ODE.

I.

VITAL ſpark of heav'nly flame,
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliſs of dying!
Ceaſe, fond Nature, ceaſe thy ſtrife,
And let me languiſh into life.

II.

Hark! they whiſper; angels ſay,
Siſter ſpirit, come away.
What is this abſorbs me quite?
Steals my ſenſes, ſhuts my ſight,
Drowns my ſpirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my ſoul, can this be Death?

III.

The world recedes; it diſappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
With ſounds ſeraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy ſting?

THE END.

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